FOR RELEASE UPON PRESENTATION
Expected 10 a.m.

Statement Of

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Administrator
National Aeronautics and Space Administration
before the
Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce
House of Representatives
July 26, 1961

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

It is a great pleasure for me to appear before this Committee this morning and talk to you about some of the work the National Aeronautics and Space Administration is doing in the field of space communications satellites.

As you gentlemen know, the President on Monday of this week issued a statement on communications satellite policy as the result of the studies which he asked the National Aeronautics and Space Council to undertake on June 15. In that statement, the President made it clear that this country's leadership in science and technology should be exercised to achieve world-wide communications through the use of satellites at the earliest practicable date. At the same time, however, the President emphasized that communications satellite programs are presently in the research and development stage, and that to date no arrangements between the Government and private industry contain

any commitments as to an operational system. In recognition of this fact, the President stated that the Government, in addition to its regulatory responsibilities, will "conduct and encourage research and development to advance the state of the art and to give maximum assurance of rapid and continuous scientific and technological progress."

NASA's primary role in the communications satellite picture is to carry out this portion of the President's directive. It is NASA's task to provide leadership and direction for the extensive research and development effort which is essential in order that a technically feasible communications satellite system may be established at the earliest possible date.

In this connection, I believe the Committee will be interested in hearing about two communications satellite projects of major importance which NASA has recently initiated. The first of these is Project Relay, which calls for the development of an experimental satellite design and prototype capable of testing the life of various components in the space environment and providing data needed to design a feasible communications satellite system.

Relay will be an active repeater satellite which will be put into an orbit extending outward to about 3,000 miles above the earth. After competitive bidding, the Radio Corporation of America was selected as the contractor for Project Relay in June, and it is expected that the project will be carried forward with the greatest possible speed.

The second project is a cooperative venture which NASA is about to commence with AT&T for the development and experimental testing of active communications satellites which AT&T will design and build entirely at its own expense. NASA will provide the facilities for launching and tracking at least two of these satellites during calendar year 1962, but AT&T will reimburse the Government for the use of these facilities as well as for all other costs associated with the launchings.

These arrangements with AT&T will add to the total program of experimentation in satellite communications and to the development of cooperative relationships between government and industry which are essential if the total national effort is to be maximized and an operational satellite system achieved at the earliest possible time. The resources and many years of experience of our international

communications carriers are a national asset of great value. The scientific and technical ingenuity of our electronics and aerospace industries have much to contribute. Therefore, as a matter of policy, private initiative and resources, as well as those of the Government, are being applied to our job.

NASA is engaged in many other activities relating to the field of satellite communications. For example, we participate in the work of the International Radio Consultative Committee, which was established as a branch of the International Telecommunications Union for the purpose of studying and making recommendations on technical radio questions and operating procedures. NASA has also participated, with other agencies of our Government, in the formulation of a United States position with respect to the international allocation of radio frequencies. Also, the work of the Interdepartmental Radio Advisory Committee, on which NASA is represented, has resulted in a major step toward a U.S. position which will provide a sound contribution to international agreement in this important area. Our efforts have been directed not only toward the farsighted allocation of bands for use by commercial and

governmental agencies all over the world to provide a variety of communications services using satellite relays, but also toward obtaining the necessary international agreements in support of the use of certain radio frequencies for other space exploration purposes.

As the members of this Committee are probably aware, an international conference will be held under the auspices of the International Telecommunications Union in the fall of 1963 to consider the allocation of radio frequencies for both research and operational phases of space communications. The ITU is a specialized agency of the United Nations organization and, as such, in our view will play a most constructive role in achieving international agreements to support the use of a universal but limited resource of nature -- namely, the radio frequency spectrum.

In February of this year, NASA completed negotiations for technical arrangements whereby the communications organizations in England and France will provide ground stations for experimental purposes in connection with Project Relay and other projects in the future. Those technical arrangements were made with the full knowledge

of the Department of State, and subsequently an exchange of notes on a Government-to-Government basis was made to cover the experimental cooperation with those countries.

It is significant, I think, that from the very beginning the United States has dealt with foreign countries interested in communications satellites on a cooperative basis. We have sought to make arrangements which provide interested countries the greatest possible opportunity for participation in experimentation. This should pave the way for further cooperative agreements that may be necessary, particularly when operational systems become technically and economically feasible.

In many of the activities outlined above, NASA has acted in close coordination with the Federal Communications Commission. We in NASA fully recognize the important responsibilities of the Commission in relation to the establishment of an operational communications satellite system at the earliest practicable date. We have had the closest and most cooperative relationship with the Commission at all levels, and I know that this will continue to be the case. Our business is primarily the advancement of space

technology, and we shall stand ready at all times to provide the Commission with any advice and assistance on this aspect of satellite communications which it desires.